St. John oldest parish in state

St. John the Evangelist Catholic Parish was established in 1831 by Father Samuel Mazzuchelli. The parish church was located in what is now Allouez Cemetery.

Besides being the oldest parish in Wisconsin, it can lay claim, to a certain extent, to being the first organized attempt to perpetuate the labors of the early missionaries, Fathers Allouez and Marquette. It is the mother church of Green Bay, from which grew the German church in 1853, the Hollandish in 1860, St. Patrick's, across the Fox River, in 1862 and SS. Peter and Paul Church in 1893.

The first church building burned down in 1847. In 1848 the Rev. A. Godfert bought an old Methodist church, located on the present site of St. John's. That building remained the place of worship until it was also destroyed by fire in 1872. The present church, built in 1911, replaced the building destroyed by fire in 1902.

At one time St. John's was the largest Catholic congregation in Green Bay. Today it is the smallest. Four hundred and forty family units numbering 1,231 people make up the parish today. Since June of 1975 the Revs. Paul Demuth and David Kasperek serve the parish as co-pastors.

Press-Gazette photo

St. John the Evangelist Catholic Church is located at 413 Saint John St.

Kasperek completed his high school, college and theology studies at Pontifical College Josephimum, Worthington, Ohio, and has his masters in religious education from Fordham University, N.Y. He was ordained on May 25, 1963 in Ohio for the Diocese of Green Bay. He served as an assistant at St. Rose Parish, Clintonville and St. Philip Parish, Green Bay and was an instructor of religion at St. Joseph Academy.

On Aug. 7, 1969 he was named director of religious education for the Diocesan Department of Education. He continues in that position, while serving as co-pastor at St. John the Evangelist Church.